



# KELLEY CAWTHORNE

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## FAX COVER SHEET

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DATE: October 24, 2005  
TO: Rep. Leon Drolet  
OFFICE: Michigan House of Representatives  
FAX NUMBER: 373-5974  
FROM: David Gregory

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### MESSAGE:

Dear Government Operations Committee members. Attached please find a position paper and brief background on HB 5281 (Inter-county drainage boards) which is scheduled for a committee hearing tomorrow morning. On behalf of our clients, the Grosse Pointe Municipalities and Wayne County, we urge you to support this bill in committee tomorrow. This bill addresses a unique situation in Michigan whereby citizens currently do not have elected official representation on inter-county drain boards involving Wayne County.

This bill gives citizens who have paid \$30 Million in assessments over a ten (10) year period a direct voice for the first time. We expect the Grosse Pointe Municipalities and Wayne County to testify in support tomorrow. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

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**GIVE TAXPAYERS A VOICE ON  
MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ASSESSMENTS  
VOTE YES ON HB 5281**

- HB 5281 would for the first time allow local governmental representation on certain inter-county drainage boards.
- Taxpayers currently have no representation by elected officials for a drainage project (Milk River Drain) in which one community, Grosse Pointe Woods, has paid over \$30 Million in assessments.
- The average homeowner in this community pays approximately \$650 annually. This is taxation without representation
- HB 5281 would allow the drain commissioner in each affected county to appoint an elected official from an assessed community to serve a two (2) year term on an inter-county drainage board.
- Under HB 5281, a drainage board would consist of the Director of the Department of Agriculture, the drain commission of each affected county, and two (2) elected officials from an assessed community in each county (only for projects involving a county with over one million in population).
- HB 5281 is supported by the assessed but currently un-represented Grosse Pointe Municipalities and by the Wayne County Executive.

**HB 5281  
BACKGROUND**

The Milk River Inter-county drain board authorized a combined sewer overflow (CSO) project. Under current law, the board consists of the Agriculture Director, the Macomb County Drain Commissioner, and the Wayne County Drain Commissioner (which is actually the appointed director of the Department of Environment). Approximately, 99% of the cost for the project fell on two (2) communities in Wayne County: Harper Woods (39%); and Grosse Pointe Woods (60%).

Wayne County, as a charter county, is the only county in the state without an elected drain commissioner. Accordingly, no elected official has direct accountability to the citizens who have paid over \$30 Million for this project. Wayne County supports local elected official representation on inter-county drain boards as a means of securing local support for important infrastructure projects.